

A TOUCH OF SUMMER-INDOORS



Written by Marlene Alexander

Friday, 06 June 2008

DOLLAR STORE STYLE

www.dollarstorestyle.com

While we're busy sprucing up the yard and gardens, we shouldn't forget to let summer shine through in our indoor decorating, as well.

It's as easy as packing your darker colored accessories away for the season and replacing them with a few summery ones.



While these ceramic watering cans do function as intended, you might also use them to house a small fabric plant or a bouquet of garden posies. However you use them, they are a perfectly delightful addition to summer decorating and only cost a dollar each.



We loved this small ceramic planter with the attached saucer. If you don't want to plant in it, use it for a votive or tea light candleholder or plant three floating fabric flowers in a bed of decorative stones. The floating flowers come on a card of four for \$1.00 and the sunflower tea lights are 3 for \$1.00. It's worth noting that these little planters come in a variety of designs and colors so you can pick one that suits your tastes. For a dollar each, why not get three and group them together on a tabletop or line them up on a shelf.



We liked this embossed 5" square ceramic pot because it reminded us of the large cement planters used outdoors. Here, we've used three sprays of fabric flowers anchored in some Spanish moss to make a floral display for the living room. Total cost was under \$5.00.

- End -

[Close Window](#)

Try a French Press for fresh coffee every time.

Contributed by Gracie Dane
Saturday, 07 June 2008

A French Press is the way to go for fresh coffee anywhere. It's portable, and all you need is hot water and some fine ground coffee.

You may have to have it special ground for best results, but if you have a Magic Bullet, or coffee grinder, that will work as well.

Presses are so easy to use, and take up less counter space than your coffee maker, and the coffee even seems to have a better flavor. All you do is pull the plunger up, put your coffee in the bottom, fill with hot water, put the lid on tight and wait 4 minutes. Then, slowly push the plunger down to remove the grounds from your coffee, pour into a cup and enjoy.

The press that we have featured today is Bodum Kenya 34 ounce coffee press. It has a glass beaker and stainless steel filter system, with a frame that protects the table from heat. You can find this on www.amazon.com by typing "coffee press" in the search box.

The Role of a Father

Contributed by Frank Hayden
Sunday, 01 June 2008

First off, this is the real world and the "Ozzie and Harriet", "Father Knows Best" and "Leave It to Beaver" dads don't exist. In the real world, it all starts with the basics...the genes passed on to you by your father.

Dads in the real world are usually about average or a little above. My Dad was average and a good worker. He worked the swing shift: 7:00am to 3:00pm, 3:00pm to 11:00pm or the 11:00pm to 7:00am shift times. Each week he would change to one of those three shifts. I worked from the time I was nine years old, so my Dad and I had a few scheduling conflicts along the way.

You learn from your father by example mostly. There are two sets of examples: those that give you a good foundation and those that show you what not to do. Dads are human, so each and every call they make isn't exactly or perfectly correct every time.

My Dad and I talked on occasion and he taught me by example also. He taught me how to drive, the basics of using tools, the difference between right and wrong -- all through his words and actions. I have found that your brain sifts through all the information and comes up with a set of standards. These standards won't be exactly like your dad's, but there will be a good mix in there. I seem to have turned out pretty well, so I am inclined to believe my Dad did a pretty good job.

When you boil it all down to the essentials, the "role of a father" is to do his level best to set your feet on a good path by the examples of word and deed he shows you as you are growing up. No dad is perfect, for they all have their good points and even some bad points. In a nutshell again, they are human. I think if a fellow has an average dad, he's doing pretty well and should consider himself fortunate in the scheme of things. Some kids think their dad walks on water, and for them, I guess their dads do.

As a dad, what stood out with my own son was that together we built the family room and his bedroom in the basement of our home. He helped me build the family room and then I helped him build his own bedroom. He planned it out, laid it out and then set to work. I lent a helping hand and offered advice when asked. It was his project and it showed us both how well he had watched, learned and could put into practice what he had learned alongside me. I don't know who was more proud when we were done.

When my daughter was little (about 4 years old) she had trouble learning to ride her bike without the training wheels and how to tell time. It didn't take too long to teach her how to ride. There was an awful lot of running along, holding the seat and giving her encouragement along the way. Finally, all I had to do was run along with her, constantly reminding her to "keep peddling, keep peddling". Teaching her to tell time was a lot less strenuous than the bike riding, I must say. Some how, some way, I said it just differently enough for the light bulb to come on and she got it. Talk about a sense of accomplishment. It is funny how BIG such a little thing is in the eyes of a father.

I did my level best to put the feet of both my children on a good path. And, by George, I think I did a good job of it. We (my wife and I) raised a mighty fine pair of adults to replace us some day in this old world. They reflect their own personalities, strengths and weaknesses and I see myself in them both. They are a visible product of solid, loving and best intentions as we (by word and deed) showed them a good path. We answered their questions, helped them confront fears, and showed them their potential. They took that potential and have both grown into adults to be proud of in this very modern world we live in.

In my eyes, that's the best legacy a father can leave.

Staying Close to Home this Summer?



Written by Lisa Greer

Friday, 06 June 2008

Many have opted to stay home this year instead of going out of town on vacation. The rising cost of gasoline has been a significant factor in these decisions.

Now the trend is moving to putting those vacation dollars toward a pool, a Wii, larger television, or other form of entertainment. But, you don't have to sacrifice everything to conserve on the gas budget. There are some short jaunts you can take locally that will serve the same purpose as if you traveled six or seven hundred miles away.



Sometimes, going out for a leisurely lunch with the family and visiting some unique, out of the way places near your home is just as relaxing, and you'd likely be doing the same thing if you traveled several states away. For example, Sensible Life visited Doe Run Inn, a quaint family inn and restaurant in Brandenburg Kentucky –just across the river from Corydon Indiana. Room rates are from \$45 for a single room, and up to \$90 for a cabin that sleeps 6-11 people. The restaurant opens at 11:00 AM on Sundays and 5:00 PM all other days. Family style dining is the theme and delicious meal selections are reasonably priced.

If this sounds like other restaurants you've been to, you will be pleasantly surprised. Doe Run was originally a mill and then in 1947, the Doe Run Hotel and Restaurant was opened. This facility is rich in history, with the older portion dating back to the late 1700s, where it was constructed with hand hewn logs and limestone. The beauty of Doe Run, combined with the serene atmosphere makes for a relaxing day or weekend trip, and to

emphasize, we have included photos below so you can see for yourself.

But, that's not all. Attractions nearby include Squire Boone Caverns, the Patton Museum of Calvary and Armor, and Otter Creek Park. To visit the Inn and the area, click on the website <http://www.doeruninn.com/> and see what piques your interest.









[Close Window](#)

Quick Desserts for the 4th of July

Contributed by Lisa Greer
Friday, 06 June 2008

Looking for some quick desserts to make to your 4th of July get together? Here are some quick and easy combinations that don't require a recipe.

Purchase an angel food cake at the store and cut into cubes and place in a large serving bowl. Pour sugar free vanilla pudding (the kind you cook is better than instant for this) over the cubes and top with blueberries and strawberries. Chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve and top with whipped topping.

Another option with angel food cake is to slice horizontally in three sections, and take a half gallon of your favorite ice cream and cut into slices that can be placed between the layers. Stack the cake back together, alternating ice cream with layers. Substitute whipped topping, any flavor, for frosting, covering the inside hole as well as the outside, then place in the refrigerator until ready to serve. This is a dessert that you'll want to fix just before serving, so the ice cream won't melt in the refrigerator.

For a dessert that is almost as refreshingly good as coconut cream pie, used sugar free, cooked vanilla pudding and substitute half and half for milk. This will make a creamy custard-like consistency. Chill until firm, then right before serving, place a layer of coconut on the pudding and top with whipped topping. This is also good with bananas, or you may also substitute fresh strawberries for the coconut.

For a healthy, cool dessert, make your own fruit salad. Cube cantaloupe and honeydew melon and place in a large bowl. Add some of your favorite fresh fruits such as sliced strawberries, seedless grapes, and pineapple. For guests who like a little extra sweetness, have fruit dip ready to drizzle on individual servings.

If you want something with even less prep time, A&W Root Beer over vanilla ice cream is sure to hit the spot.

These are just a few suggestions that will hopefully prompt you to come up with even quicker and tastier dishes. Just look around in your cupboards and your refrigerator to see what might sound good together such as honey over vanilla ice cream, or maybe some apple slices with melted peanut butter and walnuts sprinkled –you might be surprised at what you come up with.

Happy 4th of July!

Jomax: The miracle stain stripper

Contributed by Gracie Dane
Friday, 06 June 2008

How often have you spent hours trying to pressure wash your deck, fencing or other wooden feature, to get it clean and ready for a fresh coat of waterproofing stain? It's a dreaded chore, isn't it? But, it must be done to preserve the investment and keep it in top shape. So, is there an easier way?

I can now confidently say there is an easier way. We began stripping our front deck stain by pressure washing, and to be honest, the finish underneath wasn't that attractive. Then, we heard a friend talking about this amazing stain stripper that he purchased from Home Depot, and we had planned to give it a try. We ended up purchasing a stain stripper from Lowe's that worked miracles. The brand is Jomax, and it took hours off this otherwise lengthy and difficult task, while preserving the beautiful color of the wood. We've even had neighbors commenting on how great it looks after stripping the old stain.

I highly recommend this product to anyone wanting to care for the wood around or in their home. One word of caution, however. Don't get this product on your skin, as it could result in harsh chemical burns. You may want to make sure you have an aloe vera plant handy.

Jewelry Making: Making gifts from the heart

Contributed by Lisa Greer
Friday, 06 June 2008

Jewelry making is catching on quickly, and to keep up with the times, I'm starting to dabble in it myself. My curiosity with this craft began when I was trying to locate a specific piece of jewelry, and I had no luck in finding anything remotely close to it. It seemed like such a simple piece, so I began researching how to make it, and then I was hooked! I'm starting to build my bead inventory, as well as tools, wire, clasps and other essentials. If you look for the right bargains, this is a pretty economical hobby.

For example, if you have the patience to wait for Hobby Lobby's 40% off week, you can get 40% off one full priced item per visit. Not per week, per visit. Hobby Lobby offers this deal every other week, and you can visit www.hobbylobby.com to print off as many coupons as you need. I began building up my jewelry making tools by taking advantage of this deal.

Also, watch the ads. The last two weeks I've been able to purchase glass beads, clasps, tools, and accessories at 50% off. By the time I left the store, I had quite a bag full of items ranging from packets of beads, to clasps, metal bookmarks, charms, chains, etc., and I paid around \$26 for all.

Before beginning this hobby, I had heard the most difficult part of jewelry making is coming up with a design. After that, it's a breeze. To aid in coming up with a design, I checked out some books from the library, then realized I could have simply browsed through the aisles at Hobby Lobby to pick up free instructions on a variety of designs. In addition to this, instructions on various crafts can be found on their website.

Another source for instructions is Michaels art and craft store, at www.michaels.com, or you may check www.firemountain.com to order beads. As you thumb through looking for beads, notice the designs on each page, and that will help get those creative thoughts moving.

If you've even briefly considered this as a pastime, I encourage you to check it out and get started. You can create some unique gifts that will mean a lot to your friends and family because you made it, which makes it a gift from the heart — and those are the best kind!

Why Companies Perform Background Checks

Contributed by Lisa Greer
Sunday, 01 June 2008

You've just finished your second interview for a position with the company you have been targeting the last 3 years. You're confident you'll nail the position this time.

After a week goes by, they call and offer you the job. You accept, turning in your two weeks notice the same day. A few days later, you receive the hiring packet in the mail from your new employer. Included in that is a form for a background check, and in the cover letter you learn that your new job is dependent on a positive background check. "Can they do that?" you ask.

The answer to that question is an unqualified yes. Today, most employers require background checks, particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. Consequently, the more important question isn't "can they require that I pass a background check," it is "do I have a reason to be concerned." Unless you have been convicted of a crime, generally the answer to that question is no.

Often, depending on the type of position you are expected to hold, employers will limit their searches to criminal background and credit checks. If you are employed in the areas of finance or treasury, or if your position could be subject to bribery, a credit check will be standard practice.

The purpose of a background check is risk management. The employer is doing its due diligence in minimizing the risk of harm to its employees. Through background checks, an employer can avoid exposing its employees to unreasonably dangerous situations. Background checks are particularly essential when there are minors present at the employer's facility, such as on-site daycare centers. While most employers only do one background check typically during the initial hiring phase, if you are working in a school, daycare, or other position frequently dealing with minors, a regularly timed background check may be required.

Some question whether this is a violation of an employee's confidentiality rights. Typically, the answer to that question is no. Most criminal files are a matter of public record. In some states, criminal history information can only be accessed by certain individuals or groups; however, it is important to remember that most court records are open to the public.

Still, what if you've lived an exemplary life as an adult, but were a bit of a scoundrel in your younger days? Can that juvenile criminal record be revealed during a background check? Relax, it cannot. Juvenile records are almost always confidentially maintained and cannot be accessed by an employer, without your express written consent.

Note: The information contained in this section is not to be construed as legal advice, but rather an explanation for readers to understand the purpose of background checks. This information has been approved by an attorney licensed in the states of Indiana and Kentucky.